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# What Once Is Lost



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## Chapter 1 by Seirots

The dusky shafts of twilight filtered through the forest's sky scraping canopy of branches and leaves, and a faint breeze carried scents of home to the spot where my feet were planted firmly in the earth. The gentle gust that brought with it the smell of a wood burning stove and fresh baked cookies played with my skirt's fabric. An intricate, spider-web like design laced its way through the the earth in carved channels that glowed with a faint light through a layer of underbrush. Before me stood a figure amid the stones and candles of the circle, a figure clad in ashen shadows. The cinder cloak it wore was edged with elegant embroidered curls of bronze thread that swayed in the wind. The figure had no face to be seen nor spoken of, as it was replaced with a sun bleached deer's skull. Twin orbs of piercing white light floated in the pitch black shadows of the sockets where eyeballs once sat when the deer was still alive and had a beating heart. Sickly gray-tinted skin poked from the cloak's bunched up collar and bottom hem. The sleeves of the garment were long enough to conceal its hands, if there were any present. When it spoke it sounded like the skittering of thousands of bugs' legs across an ancient cold stone floor with the deep rolling melodious harmonies of an orchestra mixed into something that can hardly be called a voice.

"For what reason have you gone through the trouble of calling me here for mortal?" The Beast took a few steps towards me all the while disrupting the earthen channels, flaming candle wicks and guttering flames. It had come so close before I could utter even the slightest of sound, even be

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"Do not bother responding, for I already know, I only wished to hear it from your own mouth." The Beast inched closer and cooed, "You have a wish. It is not a wish for treasures of grandeur or a wish to witness dreams of conquest fulfilled; but a wish for a simple thing known as love." The Beast crept to the edge of the circle, to the boundary line that was set long before he was summoned. In that strange lighting that was neither warm nor cold, the Beast talked to me.

"I would only like one of three things from you in exchange." The Beast's claws became visible through the folds of the ashen fabric as it pointed to my head. "Of which do you treasure the most; your voice, your eyes, or your ears?"

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